

LISTING OF CLAIMS

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1-4 (Canceled).

5. (Currently Amended) An image search method, comprising:  
determining color similarity between a reference image and a target image[[],] each  
of which is represented by hierarchical grid levels, said determining step including cross-matching  
grid levels of the reference image with grid levels of the target image; and  
searching images based on a content-based query by a user.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 5 8, wherein said determining step  
includes: matching cells in determining similarity of reliability information indicative of accuracies  
of the region representative color values between the grid levels of the reference and image with  
cells in the grid levels of the target image images.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 5, wherein said determining step  
further includes: matching the grid levels of the reference image with respective ones of the grid  
levels of the target image, and cross-matching grid levels of the reference image with grid levels  
of the target image.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 5, wherein said determining step  
includes: matching region representative color values between the grids levels of the reference and  
target images.

9. (Currently Amended) An image search The method of claim 5, further comprising:  
determining color similarity between a reference image and a target image each of  
which is represented by hierarchical grid levels; and  
searching images based on a content-based query by a user, wherein the  
determining step comprises:

determining a similarity between cells in the hierarchical grid levels of the reference and target images in accordance with steps that include:

multiplying color similarity (Color\_Sim) corresponding to a similarity of region representative colors between cells in the grid levels of the reference and target images and a first weight,

adding a value obtained by multiplying similarity (I) representing a similarity of a reliability between cells in the grid levels of the reference and target images and a second weight to the color similarity (Color\_Sim), and

normalizing the cell similarity.

10. (Currently Amended) An image search The method of claim 5, further comprising:  
determining color similarity between a reference image and a target image each of  
which is represented by hierarchical grid levels; and  
searching images based on a content-based query by a user, wherein the  
determining step includes determining a similarity between same grid levels in the reference and target images based on a total value summed by shifting in a horizontal and vertical direction

based on a shifting amount by a difference of widths and heights between grid levels when two grid levels are compared and the similarity is calculated.

11. (Currently Amended) An image search The method of claim 5, further comprising:  
determining color similarity between a reference image and a target image each of  
which is represented by hierarchical grid levels; and  
searching images based on a content-based query by a user, wherein the  
determining step includes determining a color similarity between the grids of the reference and  
target images based on a value summed shifting in a horizontal direction and a vertical direction  
by a difference in width and heights between the grid levels.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 5, wherein a cell similarity between grid levels of the reference and target images is used for searching a same position and different position between same levels in the case that the search is performed by matching a color region.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 5, wherein a color region matching operation between the grid levels of the reference and target images is directed to searching at a same position of different levels and at a different position when searching the color similarity between different levels.

14. (Currently Amended) An image data structure tangibly embodied on a computer-readable medium, comprising:

a first grid; and

a second grid, wherein the first grid and the second grid express a feature of an image at different resolutions, wherein each of the cells in the first grid is assigned a first value and a second value for representing the spatial color feature of said image, and wherein the first value is a regional representative color and the second value is a reliability score indicative of an accuracy of the regional representative color.

15. (Previously Presented) The image data structure of claim 14, wherein the first grid includes a first number of cells and the second grid has a second number of cells different from said first number of cells.

16. (Previously Presented) The image data structure of claim 15, wherein said second number of cells is greater than said first number of cells.

17. (Previously Presented) The image data structure of claim 14, wherein the first grid and the second grid are hierarchically related.

18. (Previously Presented) The image data structure of claim 17, wherein the second grid includes a plurality of groups of cells, each group representing the feature of said image at different areas within a respective one of the cells in the first grid.

19. (Previously Presented) The image data structure of claim 15, wherein the feature is a spatial color feature.

20. (Canceled).

21. (Canceled).

22. (Currently Amended) The image data structure of claim ~~20~~ 14, wherein each of the cells in the second grid is assigned multiple values for representing the spatial color feature of said image.

23. (Previously Presented) The image data structure of claim 15, wherein the number of cells in the first grid and the number of cells in the second grid are proportional to a size of the image.

24. (Previously Presented) The image data structure of claim 23, wherein the image has a square shape and is uniformly divided into the cells of the first grid.

25. (Previously Presented) The image data structure of claim 23, wherein the image has a non-square shape, and wherein a first side of the image is divided uniformly and a second side of the image is divided based on a dividing unit of the first side, said divisions forming the cells in the first grid.

26. (Previously Presented) The image data structure of claim 15, wherein each of the cells in the first grid have a first size and each of the cells in the second grid have a second size different from said first size.

27. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 5, wherein the determining step is performed using a multilevel image data structure which is expressed based on an image grid having at least two different hierarchical levels.

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